CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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FINAL RECORD OF THE FIVE HUNDRED AND NINETEENTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 20 July 1989, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Luvsandorjiin Bayart (Mongolia)

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The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 519th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

In accordance with its programme of work, the Conference continues today its consideration of agenda item 4, entitled "Chemical weapons". However, in accordance with rule 30 of the rules of procedure, any member wishing to do so may raise any subject relevant to the work of the Conference.

I have on my list of speakers for today the representatives of Italy, the German Democratic Republic, Belgium and Romania. I take particular pleasure in welcoming to the Conference Ambassador Aldo Pugliese, an old friend, who will be addressing the plenary meeting today as representative of Italy. I now give the floor to Ambassador Pugliese.

Mr. PUGLIESE (Italy): Thank you, Mr. President, for the nice words you have addressed to me. At the outset, allow me to express to you my warmest congratulations upon your assumption of the presidency of the Conference for this month. I am fully confident that under your skilful and effective guidance the Conference will be able to achieve decisive progress in its deliberations. I also wish to extend my delegation's deepest appreciation to your predecessor, the distinguished representative of Mexico, Ambassador Garcia Robles, for the experienced and able manner in which he presided over the Conference on Disarmament during the month of June.

The Conference on Disarmament has resumed its activities at a time when disarmament prospects hold great promise and the international climate, in general, seems to favour a successful outcome of endeavours aimed at a drastic reduction of the military confrontation and at a consolidation of peace and stability.

In the context of the East-West dialogue, the recent summit of the Atlantic Alliance in Brussels announced new proposals in the field of conventional force reductions, with the precise aim of imparting a new and decisive impulse to the CFE Vienna negotiations. Such proposals have already been introduced in treaty form, following the elaboration of some essential details, at the negotiating table in Vienna, two months in advance of what had been foreseen by the summit itself.

This is - in our view - another example of a definite willingness to promote the rapid achievement of concrete results in these negotiations, which hold exceptional importance for stability and peace in Europe and which have already allowed an unprecedented conceptual rapprochement in the mere four months since they started last March. Recently, the Soviet-United States negotiations on START and on space questions, and other bilateral talks between the United States and the USSR, have been resumed in a very constructive atmosphere, enhancing the prospects of conclusive developments in a not too distant future.

The Italian Government welcomes these developments and believes that they should constitute an encouragement for us to face our tasks with a renewed sense of commitment and with a firm will to succeed.

(Mr. Pugliese, Italy)

The Geneva Conference on Disarmament has so far largely proved its effectiveness as a distinct multilateral laboratory of intents and concepts relevant to the disarmament process; our essential task is to go further and to address our efforts towards the achievement of decisive concrete results on extremely important issues which can influence the future of mankind itself.

It is thus imperative, in the light of the increasingly dynamic international framework, that the Conference on Disarmament live up to its real objectives and play a major role in providing a substantive contribution to the international disarmament process and to the search for strengthened stability and peace in the whole world.

Mr. Andreotti, our Minister for Foreign Affairs, in his statement here on 2 March, along with Mr. Genscher, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Germany, stressed again the priority importance and the urgency that the Italian Government attaches to the conclusion of a convention on the total ban of chemical weapons.

In this context, I must clearly express Italy's strong wish that progress on this issue be much quicker than proved possible during our last session and that, therefore, our work may take on a faster pace and greater dynamism.

Indeed, after the success achieved by the Paris Conference, the call for an intensification of efforts for the achievement of early results has found particularly in Ambassador Morel's competent guidance and dedicated resolve the most reliable and committed interpretation of its requirements.

However, the stronger impetus imparted to the negotiations has not been rewarded so far by the corresponding substantial developments we were expecting. Whereas we feel that, while some progress on certain specific, quite significant, issues has been achieved, on the whole, not enough advance has been made, and most important issues remain unsolved.

Italy is concerned that we might lose the momentum to proceed towards the complete elimination of these hideous weapons and to prevent the existing risks of proliferation. We are firmly convinced in this regard that the only way to stop a possible catastrophic spread of chemical weapons is to conclude a total and global ban as soon as possible.

In this spirit we shall also participate in the Canberra conference, trusting that it will help to give a concrete turn to the efforts aimed at the conclusion of a chemical weapons ban and to a realistic comprehension of the background against which the convention is being elaborated.

With all appreciation for the many and useful national contributions on specific and highly detailed questions, we think that delegations should now try hard to concentrate and direct their efforts towards the solution of crucial issues that are still pending in the way of an early conclusion of negotiations. In spite of endless efforts to regulate in advance the future convention to the utmost detail, it might in fact prove illusory to aim at too

(Mr. Fugliese, Italy)

detailed perfection in the search for ideal solutions to extremely complex problems. The ban is bound to bear some kind of imperfection or other at the outset and will have to be submitted to a constant fine-tuning on the basis of subsequent implementation and experience: there should be no doubt that the same political will and sense of commitment that will allow the finalization of the convention should enable parties to co-operate to ensure full compliance.

Verification issues are clearly central to an effective ban and on many aspects they still present us with unsolved complexities. However, we are convinced that the definition of a reliable verification system along the lines identified through our work is not only possible, but even within reach, given the political will to overcome the remaining obstacles and a sufficient spirit of compromise. We are encouraged by the results of the trial inspections that have been carried out by various countries in the last few months, which, in our opinion, should contribute to a conclusive turn towards the solution of verification problems. Challenge inspections, in our view, will remain the essential element of a verification régime which is capable of deterring violations and establishing compliance.

We are certainly open to other suggestions and we have considered with interest the proposals of the United Kingdom and of the Federal Republic of Germany, envisaging additional means of verification. At the same time, we believe that the most urgent task is to concretely address the main aspects and to avoid academic debates that might distract our attention.

We also think that an advance data exchange with provisions for its verification will significantly contribute to a general increase of confidence and thus constitute an important element to facilitate the adoption of a ban.

In this context, Italy is heartened by the fact that a growing number of countries are taking a direct interest in the negotiations for a ban, which, to be really effective, must be supported by all countries concerned and - ideally - should be of a universal character.

We wonder whether it may be feasible to contemplate a methodological approach aimed at disposing of the solution of the most important issues in the shortest possible time while setting temporarily aside the cases of less vital character. These might indeed be tackled at a later stage. A prolonged lack of success in finalizing any instrument on the global prohibition of chemical weapons may in fact be interpreted as a failure in preventing an unchecked dissemination of militarily relevant chemical technologies around the world: a prospect casting an historic responsibility upon this body.

Another important element of the convention is certainly related to the institutional aspects. In fact, it will be essential, in the Italian view, to ensure a balanced and satisfactory representation in the organs which will have competence for implementing the convention and ensuring compliance.

Italy is convinced that universal and loyal participation in the future convention will only be ensured through a widespread feeling that all legitimate interests are protected through fair representation.

(Mr. Pugliese, Italy)

With this in mind, we believe, as regards participation in the executive council, for example, that it will have to be wide enough and to adequately reflect regional, political and industrial realities, with no provision for unjustified differentiated membership.

As regards other items on our agenda, allow me first of all to state the satisfaction of my delegation at the positive contribution provided by the Group of Scientific Experts (GSE) in devising a general and effective verification régime for the monitoring of seismic events. Unfortunately, we can hardly speak of any other significant progress on the three nuclear items on our agenda during the spring session. We support efforts currently being made by Ambassador Yamada of Japan to secure a consensus on a specific mandate for the resumption of the Ad Hoc Committee on a nuclear test ban. It is regrettable that obstacles prevent more substantive activity from being carried out. Even in the absence of a negotiating mandate, the Conference could still make a useful contribution to the progress of this item.

My Government remains deeply committed to the final objective of a verifiable and comprehensive test ban, as one of the main issues on our agenda. We recognize, however, that a comprehensive test ban cannot be isolated from other issues concerning the disarmament process at large and the evolution of the strategic balance. Thus our support, as previously stated before this forum, goes to a step-by-step approach, favoured by a more flexible attitude by all members of the CD and assisted by progress achieved in the separate, but very relevant, forum of the United States-USSR negotiations on progressive limitation of their nuclear tests.

Lastly, in the field of the prevention of an arms race in outer space, we welcomed the announced resumption of bilateral negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union at Geneva, on 19 June, on START and space matters; it is to be hoped that progress on all space-related items at a bilateral level will stimulate more substantive progress on the same item here at the CD: this may take place through the clarification of issues, such as a correct and uniform terminology, the relationship between bilateral and multilateral forums, improved access to information, the strengthening of the existing régime governing outer space, as well as the promotion of an appropriate set of confidence-building measures consistent with technological innovations.

In this framework, growing stability in space relationships can greatly benefit from closer co-operation also in the civil exploitation of space, given the close interconnection between the civil and military uses of outer space.

The military use of outer space poses serious problems of verification, but these are not impossible to solve: technical problems connected with verification procedures can be tackled when there is a strong political will. My delegation believes that significant progress can and should be achieved in the field of outer space verification and of the identification of means to ensure compliance with existing agreements.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the distinguished representative of Italy for his statement and for the kind words that he addressed to me. I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of the German Democratic Republic, Ambassador Dietze.

Mr. DIETZE (German Democratic Republic): Already at the beginning of this month, I had an opportunity to set forth in detail our viewpoint on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. As you know, the German Democratic Republic advocates that effective and verifiable agreements be concluded on the prohibition of the development, testing and deployment of weapons in outer space. On several occasions we have advanced proposals to this end. Today I should like to briefly touch upon another issue of the work of the Outer Space Committee, i.e. an analysis of existing agreements relevant to the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

The delegations of socialist countries have repeatedly elaborated on the special aspect of the protection of objects in outer space. Therefore I should like to submit to the Conference today on behalf of Bulgaria, Hungary and the German Democratic Republic a working paper CD/933 (CD/OS/WP.34) entitled "Survey of international law relevant to immunity and protection of objects in space and to other basic principles of outer space activities". This document shows in particular that the existing legal régime for outer space is adding to the protection of outer space objects. Against this background, it is crucially important that all States strictly comply with these agreements and apply their specific provisions. The working paper comprises a review of international law regarding immunity of objects in outer space. It is structured, as you will see, in the following manner: first - basic norms; second - norms concerning national jurisdiction over and ownership of objects after their launch into outer space; third - other main principles of activities in outer space. The survey contained in document CD/933 clearly indicates that the existing legal régime does not guarantee all-embracing protection of objects in outer space. Therefore, we think, additional measures are needed to this effect. What would also serve this aim is the further codification and development of existing rules of international law relating to the protection of space objects, which would constitute a major step towards preventing an arms race in outer space. These measures could encompass steps providing for confidence-building and for prohibiting the weaponization of outer space. In our opinion, these two aspects are interlinked.

So much for the introduction of the document before the Conference. I should like to add some other remarks.

During the last meetings of the Outer Space Committee it was possible to listen to interesting scientific contributions on the subject of arms control, which were delivered by outer space experts from the Soviet Union, France and the Federal Republic of Germany. It has become obvious once more that the knowledge and expertise of experts is indeed helpful in this context. On the part of our delegation it is envisaged that an expert from the German Democratic Republic will address the meeting of the Outer Space Committee next week. As regards the involvement of experts in the work of the Outer Space Committee, we hold the view that tangible progress has been achieved in this

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respect. The explanations made by experts have been substantial in nature and focused on expounding the proposals of their countries in a more detailed way. We would welcome it very much if in July 1990 delegations would facilitate the appearance of outer space experts. We feel that it would be suitable, in this connection, to co-ordinate the activities of experts and organize a direct exchange of opinion among them first. We think this could help to make the future work of the Outer Space Committee more concrete and more effective. As far as my delegation is concerned, we are prepared to make a distinctive contribution to this effect.

Mr. HOULLEZ (Belgium) (translated from French): Mr. President, though I shall be speaking on behalf of the Group of Western States, I should like first of all, on behalf of the Belgian delegation, to express our profound satisfaction at seeing you presiding over our work. Your experience and your sense of diplomacy, conveyed so subtly thanks to your linguistic knowledge, will guarantee you success in your task.

I should also like to pay tribute to your predecessor, our doyen, Ambassador García Robles, for the remarkable way in which he guided our work.

Finally, I am particularly pleased, as a former Ambassador to Warsaw, to congratulate the Polish delegation on the occasion of their national day.

The delegations of the Western countries, on whose behalf I have the honour to speak today, have consistently stressed the special significance they attach to an in-depth consideration of the nuclear items on our agenda. This interest derives from the overriding necessity of avoiding war and strengthening international security and stability in the nuclear age. The prevention of nuclear war is a global concern and not merely the responsibility of certain States or military alliances. Our current efforts in this regard take place at a time of unprecedented change and opportunity. Developments in East-West relations suggest that real progress is possible in the field of arms control and disarmament. The changes that are taking place in some regions are bringing us closer to the vision of a just, humane and democratic world. Western countries welcome increased openness, greater respect for human rights and active participation of the individual in shaping foreign policy. If sustained, these trends will strengthen the prospects for fundamental improvements in international relations, a prerequisite for real progress in the disarmament field.

The basic goal of Western arms control and disarmament policy is to strengthen security and increase stability at the lowest balanced level of forces and armaments consistent with the requirements for the prevention of war and for defence. Current prospects notwithstanding, we face an immediate future which is both promising and uncertain. Peace must always be striven for, it can never be taken for granted. With this background in mind, military security and policies aimed at reducing tension and resolving underlying political differences are not contradictory, but on the contrary complementary. In their determined efforts to reduce the relative importance of the military component and in trying to replace confrontation with co-operation, the Western countries will, both in East-West relations and

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globally, exploit the opportunities for arms control as an agent of change. We will spare no effort to ensure that these positive trends and developments result in greater security and stability for the benefit of all States. The Western countries members of the Atlantic Alliance adopted on 29 and 30 May a comprehensive concept of arms control and disarmament which provides a way ahead in this respect and sets an agenda for the future. This concept, which was circulated as document CD/926, represents a comprehensive approach to the CD agenda items "Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament" and "Prevention of nuclear war including all related matters" as interrelated issues. The Western Group of countries believes that these issues can only be dealt with satisfactorily in a broader context of prevention of war in general. It is with this objective in mind that the Western countries are continuing their active and constructive approach to these items.

In the field of arms control we have already expressed our satisfaction about the progress made. The INF Treaty has eliminated a whole category of weapons, while providing for stringent verification measures. We reaffirm our desire for the conclusion as soon as possible of an agreement significantly reducing the strategic nuclear arsenals of the two major nuclear Powers by eliminating destabilizing offensive capabilities. Although the members of the Western Group are actively working for further progress in the field of nuclear disarmament, they nevertheless stress that in their view the reduction of nuclear arms cannot be fully dissociated from other disarmament measures and that it must take place within the context of a strengthening of international stability and security. In this respect they welcome with satisfaction the general improvement in relations between the two main nuclear Powers, their respective allies and other European States, which has led to the opening of negotiations on conventional disarmament and on confidence-building and security measures in Europe, on which they hope to see rapid progress. Agreements in this field and in the START negotiations already mentioned would constitute, both in themselves and through interaction among different arms control elements, major contributions to stability. The Western countries members of the Atlantic Alliance have stated that the implementation of such agreements could facilitate further reductions in substrategic nuclear forces, although it would not obviate the need for such forces. Once implementation of an agreement on conventional forces in Europe has begun, the way could be opened for negotiations on partial reductions in United States and Soviet land-based short-range nuclear missiles to equal and verifiable levels.

Noting that it is incumbent upon all States to intensify their efforts and take steps to promote disarmament, all members of the Group of Western countries observe with growing concern the acquisition or the development of ballistic missiles by an increasing number of States. The elimination of this potential source of international instability and insecurity would seem to call for action, whether at the bilateral, regional or international levels, especially if this development were to be accompanied by national nuclear programmes. Delegations of the Western Group consider that the establishment of a subsidiary body for item 2 is inappropriate at the present stage and that in current circumstances it would be better to work on the cessation of the

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nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament in plenary and informal meetings. However, in our view the most appropriate tool for dealing with these problems is plenary debate, where views of delegations are put on final record.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the distinguished representative of Belgium for his statement and for the kind words he addressed to me. I now call on the distinguished representative of Romania, Ambassador Dolgu.

Mr. DOLGU (Romania) (translated from French): Mr. President, allow me at the outset to associate myself with previous speakers in conveying to you our warmest congratulations on the occasion of your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament and for your most able and dynamic conduct of our work so far during this month of July. In you, we hail a representative of a country with which Romania enjoys close links of friendship and co-operation as well as a diplomat and colleague whose experience and tact are well known to all.

Our congratulations go as well to your predecessor, the distinguished Ambassador of Mexico, Alfonso Garcia Robles, for the exemplary manner in which he discharged his duties. I take this opportunity to express our best wishes for the future to those colleagues who have left us - Mario Campora of Argentina, Aldo Pugliese of Italy, Nihal Rodrigo of Sri Lanka and Youri Nazarkin of the Soviet Union - and to assure them that our warm wishes go with them throughout their future career. It is a pleasure to welcome and greet an old friend whom we all esteem, in the person of Mr. Batsanov, the new representative of the Soviet Union to the Conference on Disarmament.

In the view of the Romanian delegation, the international community is entitled to expect more substantial results from the Conference on Disarmament. Firstly, while the international situation is still complex and contradictory, the fact remains that developments in international affairs, the progress made in the settlement of regional disputes, the signing of the Soviet-United States treaty on the elimination of medium and short-range nuclear missiles, followed by steps to implement it, and the beginning of the Vienna negotiations on conventional weapons are so many positive elements conducive to progress on the issues on the Conference's agenda. Secondly, there is no lack of competence and expertise in this forum. A large number of proposals and suggestions have been put forward with respect to the first item on the agenda, namely, "Nuclear-test ban". The draft submitted by Czechoslovakia remains on the table, and Ambassador Yamada of Japan is continuing his efforts to find a formula that is generally acceptable. In another sphere, Ambassador Pierre Morel of France, after his remarkable efforts in preparing for the success of the Paris Conference, is continuing to show inexhaustible energy and imagination in his capacity as Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons. In the Ad Hoc Committee on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space, thanks to various initiatives, including your own, Mr. President, we have got a better grasp of the substantive issues to be discussed and to be settled in the framework of a legal régime that could meet our aims. Finally, with respect to the Ad Hoc Committee on the Comprehensive Programme of Disarmament, I would

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mention the remarkable efforts made by its distinguished Chairman, Ambassador García Robles. In this area as on other items on the agenda, many delegations of member and non-member countries have come forward with contributions or proposals of great interest and usefulness.

Despite all these efforts progress has been modest. We have repeatedly examined issues relating to the question of expanding the Conference's role and increasing its efficiency, but as we have already stressed, the fundamental problem in our view is still to find the political will necessary to give the multilateral forum its proper place in any disarmament process. A particular responsibility falls to the major nuclear powers in this respect, but the process cannot be sustained and carried to a successful conclusion without the involvement and active participation of all countries concerned. We too wish to emphasize the necessary complementarity of efforts in the bilateral, regional and multilateral spheres. It is high time for all our capitals to understand that the single multilateral forum this Conference represents ought not to be barred from dealing with certain subjects which are in fact central, such as nuclear disarmament. The Conference ought to be in a position to engage in substantive discussion and negotiations on all of the priority questions on its agenda, to play its role in full and to contribute very specifically to a real disarmament process.

Allow me now to make a few brief comments on certain aspects of our work that we consider particularly important and topical. One objective that is now accepted for ensuring international security and building lasting peace is the achievement of general and complete disarmament, and first and foremost, nuclear disarmament. Nuclear disarmament first, because, by their power of destruction and the size of the existing arsenals, nuclear weapons today are capable of destroying mankind and civilization on our planet. Nuclear disarmament first, because so long as these arsenals exist the danger of sliding into disaster cannot be ruled out. Nuclear disarmament first, because we are talking about a threat that weighs upon the security of all States whether they possess nuclear weapons or not. Given this situation and despite the fact that there is more and more talk of the need for a new approach to problems of international security in disarmament, the concept of nuclear deterrence continues to provide the basis for the military doctrines of certain States. For our part we can only regret this situation and reiterate our firm conviction that nuclear weapons, far from assuring or consolidating the security of States, diminish and jeopardize it, because nuclear deterrence and the military doctrines associated with it in fact assume the possibility of using nuclear weapons and give rise to the steady qualitative and quantitative growth of nuclear arsenals. Trusting in nuclear deterrence and all that implies is one of the last clichés of the arms race. Like other clichés, it is doomed to disappear, but how long will we have to wait? If we compare present approaches with those which prevailed in previous decades we observe that disarmament in general, and nuclear disarmament in particular, apart from certain difficulties inherent in comparability and verification remains a problem of political will. As was pointed out by Ambassador Theorin of Sweden, it took 20 years from the signature of the Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons for the nuclear Powers to take a first

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step in fulfilling the undertaking they had assumed to continue their negotiations in good faith and implement effective nuclear disarmament measures. We share the view that mankind cannot afford the luxury of waiting another 20 years for the next step. Substantial steps aimed at the reduction and ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons should take place at an ever faster pace so that mankind can hope to enter upon the next millenium without this sword of Damocles threatening its existence. Of course in the sphere of nuclear disarmament one can imagine various scenarios and priorities. Common sense would suggest acting simultaneously along several avenues, for the denuclearization of the European continent, the 50 per cent reduction in the strategic weapons of the Soviet Union and the United States and the cessation of all nuclear tests.

As far as tactical nuclear weapons are concerned, I would have two comments to make. The first is that nuclear arsenals are continuing to grow, and implementation of NATO's proposed decision to modernize its tactical nuclear weapons can only strengthen that trend. The second is that a conflict in Europe with the use of tactical nuclear weapons would lead not only to the destruction of the countries within the area of deployment on either side of the line separating the two blocs, but would also inevitably degenerate into a generalized nuclear exchange. This is why the NATO countries should seize the opportunity provided by the Soviet Union's recent proposal. In this context, I should like to remind you that my country has systematically spoken in favour of all measures which may ultimately be conducive to denuclearizing the European continent. Thus during the "missiles in Europe" crisis, Romania came out in favour of the withdrawal of the Soviet SS20s and the abandonment of the decision to deploy United States Pershing II and Cruise missiles in Europe. Then after the beginning of deployment of these missiles, my country appealed to both countries to show restraint, appealed to them not to take retaliatory measures and argued vigorously for measures of reciprocally acceptable de-escalation. At the same time we expressed the hope that Soviet-United States negotiations in Geneva would not be interrupted, and after they were that they should be resumed without preconditions. Our approach has not changed. It is therefore only logical that we should express our concern at the reservations of certain nuclear Powers that in fact oppose measures aimed at freeing the European continent from all nuclear weapons. The bilateral Soviet-United States negotiations on a 50 per cent cut in their strategic nuclear weapons are particularly important. The agreement on medium and shorter-range nuclear missiles was important especially because of the new approach it involved and its symbolic value in eliminating a whole category of nuclear weapons. But a 50 per cent reduction in strategic nuclear arsenals would mark a decisive commitment to nuclear disarmament and would be likely to accelerate the disarmament process as a whole.

As for the prohibition of nuclear tests, I must reiterate our basic position, which is that in conditions where the existing nuclear arsenals are enough to destroy mankind, there can be no justification for continuing these tests. To pursue nuclear tests is not only to heap new burdens on the present and future of mankind and to open up new and possibly irreparable wounds in our fragile environment, it is also to consolidate the material basis for a continued and accelerated arms race, for the creation of new types and new

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systems of weapons, which could cancel out the effects of nuclear weapon reductions. In our view, the continuation of nuclear testing is at odds with the spirit and the letter of the Non-Proliferation Treaty and can only weaken the credibility of that Treaty. It is an element that we must bear in mind with a view to the 1990 conference, and especially the fifth review conference in 1995, meetings that will be decisive for the fate of this international legal instrument. The initiative to convene an international conference to amend the 1963 Treaty banning nuclear tests in the three environments by extending this ban to tests underground already enjoys the support of 40 States including Romania. The conditions for convening such a conference have thus been met. This demonstrates a strong political will and increasing insistence by the international community that nuclear tests must be permanently banned. We cannot share the doubts expressed here as to the timeliness and validity of this initiative, because it is not likely to hamper the performance by the Conference on Disarmament of its role, and even less the achievement of the specific mandate entrusted to it. Like other delegations, we see in this a complementarity, not a substitution. It goes without saying that the success of the Conference requires adequate preparation both in terms of substance and in terms of organization so that it may make a positive and clear contribution to the disarmament process. As to the responsibility of the Conference on Disarmament, my delegation continues to favour debates on substance and negotiations within an appropriate working structure created on the basis of the proposals put forward under the Conference's first agenda item, "Nuclear-test ban". It ought to be possible to have structured debates, if not negotiations, within the appropriate working structure on the other two points of the agenda concerning nuclear issues.

Romania participates with the other States parties to the Warsaw Treaty, the members of NATO and other countries of Europe in the Vienna negotiations on a radical reduction in conventional weapons under strict international control, and remains determined to make its contribution to the achievement of an agreement as soon as possible. Our country firmly favours a reduction of at least 50 per cent in these weapons and a balance between the two blocs which rules out any possibility of military aggression. Under present circumstances the fundamental problem of international life remains for us the abandonment of nuclear weapons and of the programme for their modernization, the achievement of new agreements between the Soviet Union and the United States of America on a 50 per cent reduction in offensive nuclear weapons and a general agreement on the total liquidation of nuclear weapons. It is necessary that all States give up nuclear tests forthwith, that they give up militarization of space, that we reach an appropriate agreement on the elimination of chemical weapons in close relationship with the elimination of nuclear weapons. Likewise we firmly favour a reduction in military expenditure, by at least 50 per cent in an initial stage, with the financial resources thus released being used to meet various economic and social needs of the countries in question as well as to support the developing countries.

To conclude, I wish to quote the words of the President of my country, Nicolae Ceausescu: "Socialist Romania is firmly resolved to participate actively in the achievement of disarmament, in the establishment of new international relations that rule out force and the threat of force."

The PRESIDENT: I thank the distinguished representative of Romania for his statement and for his kind words about me. That concludes my list of speakers for today. Does any other member wish to take the floor? That does not seem to be the case.

I have requested the Secretariat to circulate today an informal paper containing the timetable of meetings to be held by the Conference and its subsidiary bodies during next week. As you will notice, provision is made for the meetings of the Ad Hoc Group of Scientific Experts to Consider International Co-operative Measures to Detect and Identify Seismic Events, which starts its twenty-eighth session on 24 July. The timetable for other meetings has been prepared in consultation with the chairmen of subsidiary bodies and, as usual, is merely indicative and subject to change, if necessary. On that understanding, I suggest that we adopt the informal paper.

It was so decided.

You will recall that, at the end of the informal meeting held by the Conference last Tuesday, we agreed that any member wishing to advance a proposal relating to the forthcoming Third Review Conference of the Sea-bed Treaty should signify that wish to me, so that we might meet again in informal meeting this morning, to allow the delegation or delegations concerned to present their suggestions and other delegations to express views on them, if necessary. I wish to inform you that I have not received any requests for consideration today at an informal meeting on further measures in the field of disarmament for the prevention of an arms race on the sea-bed, the ocean floor and the subsoil thereof. Accordingly, there will be no need to hold such a meeting today.

As I have no other business for today, I intend now to adjourn this plenary meeting. The next plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament will be held on Tuesday, 25 July, at 10 a.m.

The plenary meeting stands adjourned.

The meeting rose at 11.05 a.m.